



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT



STATUS REPORT

FROM: Marcelo Calle, Manager
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DATE: May 31, 2016

RE: Progress Report on the Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Mining Plan Modification for Federal Lease MTM 94378 (Spring Creek Mine)

Since January 21, 2016, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) has been preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Mining Plan Modification for Federal Lease MTM 94378 (Spring Creek Mine) as ordered by the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana. To date, OSMRE has:

- (1) Retained the service of a third-party consultant to help prepare the noted EA;
- (2) Developed a schedule establishing project milestones for completion of an EA by September 17, 2016;
- (3) Published notice of its intent to prepare the EA, a description of the project, and the comment period in the *Sheridan Press* (Sheridan, Wyoming) and the *Big Horn County News* (Hardin, Montana) on February 11, 2016 and second notices were published on February 25, 2016;
- (4) Announced the project and comment period on OSMRE's Western Region website at <http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/SpringcreekMineLBA1/shtm>;

- (5) Mailed outreach letters to potentially interested individuals, land owners, organizations, and Tribes, which describe the project and announced a public comment period;
- (6) Opened a public comment period on the issues and alternatives for potential consideration in the EA on February 11, 2016. The comment period ended on March 12, 2016. OSMRE received 1,890 comments. In coordination with the consultant, OSMRE is reviewing the comments received and will consider them in the development of the EA.
- (7) OSMRE received chapters 1 through 6 from the consultant for internal review. These chapters include a description of the Purpose and Need, Proposed Action, Alternatives considered, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences for the direct, indirect and cumulative effects attributed to the federal action.
- (8) OSMRE is in the process of completing final internal review of the EA and, if appropriate will prepare an unsigned finding of no significant impact (FONSI). OSMRE intends to publish notice of availability announcing to the public opportunity to review and comment on the EA and unsigned FONSI on June 2, 2016. The public will have 33 days to submit comment for consideration.

At this time, the project is on schedule and no delays are anticipated.